FELLOWSHIP IN PRAYER

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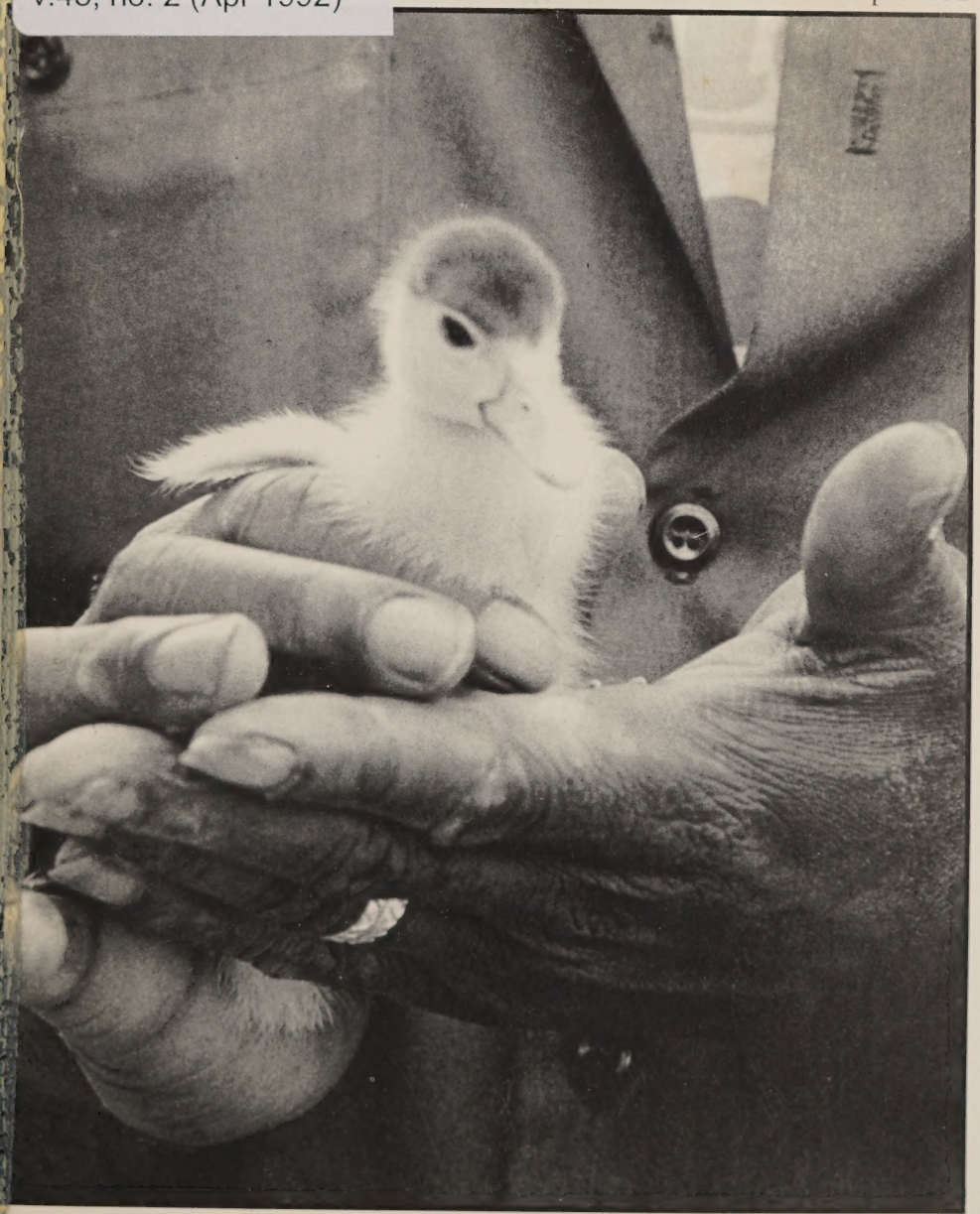

Since 1949 the purpose of Fellowship in Prayer is to promote the practice of prayer among all religious faiths whose fundamental belief is in God regardless of race, creed, or color, and whose tenets include the universal attributes of truth, honesty, justice, and mercy, that thereby there may arise a closer relation to Almighty God and a deeper spirit of fellowship among mankind.

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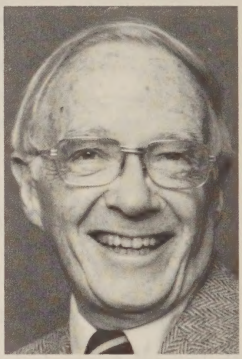


We're often asked for specific suggestions about prayer: when, where and how to pray; what prayers to offer; what to expect from prayer; is it effective, and how do we know?

There are no definitive answers to such questions. Over time, our own experience is the best guide.

Mystics have gone to mountains and deserts to find the sacred space best suited to communion with God. Pilgrims have gone to cathedrals, shrines, and temples. Most of us, however, talk to—or listen for—the voice of God in the kitchen, on the subway, by the bank of a stream. All ways are perfect—for in truth, God is everywhere and in everything, and the intention and intensity of the one who prays is of far greater importance than his or her physical surroundings or form of prayer.

Sadly, our world today doesn't encourage the life of the Spirit. Peace and quiet are rare. The demands on our time and resources seem endless. The noise, the news, the suffering, the sense of isolation and anxiety often seem overwhelming.

For refuge we turn inward, seeking, through prayer and meditation, that sacred space where, in the stillness, we can come into communion with our God—however we name or perceive the ultimate source and creative energy of the universe.

Through that healing experience we become more loving, more hopeful, more compassionate. And we become channels through which those divine qualities become manifest in the world. When we pray we set into motion vast, invisible energies from which visible effects will inevitably follow.

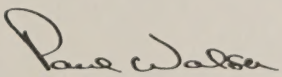
What prayers should we use? That's up to us. Much of the world's most beautiful literature is sacred literature, coming down to us through the centuries from all the world's faith traditions. *Fellowship in Prayer* is an excellent source of beautiful and moving prayers. Each issue offers prayers from a variety of authors, well known and unknown, ancient and contemporary.

These, and prayers learned as children and at religious services, often

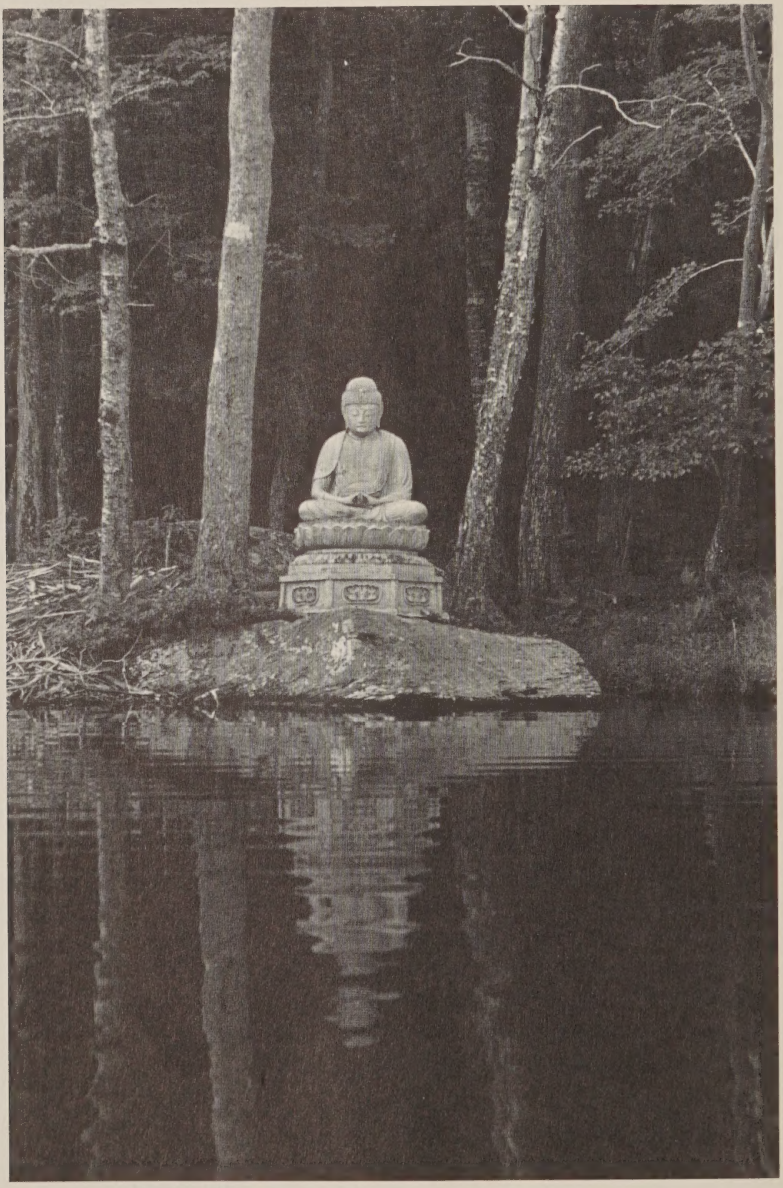
speak most movingly to our condition. At other times, feeling a deep hunger for a more unique and personal experience of the divine mystery, we may speak our own prayers directly from our heart. Or we may choose to listen in silence for God, who speaks to us from within and thus requires an interior quieting of the mind as well as an outer silence.

Every sincere prayer is as valuable as another. There are four principles, however, that spiritual leaders in all ages have found to be of particular value to our spiritual life and the effectiveness of our prayers.

1. *Pray with gratitude.* If we reflect on the blessings of our life—starting with the fact that we are alive—we realize how very much we have to be grateful for. Gratitude and giving thanks for what we have—and for what it is in us to be—are at the heart of effective prayer.
2. *Look forward to praying.* The time you spend in prayer and meditation can become the most celebratory time of your day. Since we don't spend that much time praying, the time we do spend is precious. Don't let your prayer and meditation become routine or feel like a duty. Cultivate an attitude of joyfulness about this wonderful opportunity to spend time with the source of your being.
3. *Pray without ceasing.* St. Paul's famous admonition (comparable to Native Americans' goal of becoming "a walking prayer") tells us that prayer is the way to come into harmony with the divine purpose in all circumstances and activities of life.
4. *Have confidence in prayer.* Never underestimate the power of prayer. Prayer recalls us to our inner blessedness. It reminds us of God's love, the sure foundation of our being. It leads us to the deep reservoir of spiritual power within us that is available always for helping us, our family, our neighbors, our mother earth. We can't foresee the answer to our prayers nor should we demand instant satisfaction of all our desires and complaints. What we *can* do through prayer is to open ourselves to the amazing grace that will bless and sustain us all the days of our lives.



Paul Walsh



O God, Your immensity fills the earth and the whole universe, but the universe itself cannot contain You, much less the earth, and still less the world of my thoughts.

Yves Raguin

To adore . . . That means to lose oneself in the unfathomable, to plunge into the inexhaustible, to find peace in the incorruptible, to be absorbed in defined immensity, to offer oneself to the fire and the transparency, to annihilate oneself in proportion as one becomes more deliberately conscious of oneself, and to give of one's deepest to that whose depth has no end.

Teilhard de Chardin

Almighty One, in the woods I am blessed. Happy everyone in the woods. Every tree speaks through You. O God! What glory in the woodland. On the heights is peace—peace to serve You.

Ludwig van Beethoven

Day after day, O God of my life, shall I stand before You face to face? With folded hands, O God of all worlds, shall I stand before You face to face? Under Your great sky in solitude and silence, with humble heart shall I stand before You face to face? In this laborious world of Yours, tumultuous with toil and struggle, among hurrying crowds shall I stand before You face to face? And when my work shall be done in this world, O God of Gods, alone and speechless shall I stand before You face to face?

Tagore

Thou takest the pen—and the lines dance.
Thou takest the flute—and the notes shimmer.
Thou takest the brush—and the colours sing.
So all things have meaning and beauty in that space beyond time where Thou art. How, then, can I hold back anything from Thee?

Dag Hammarskjold

O, give thanks to the Lord of Lords;
for God's mercy endures forever.

Ps. 136.3

Antenati

FANNIE PECZENIK

A master story-teller ponders a small coincidence. Could it be an experience of God-acting-anonymously?

Several years ago, having said that he would not live until September, my uncle died at the end of August. He had already outlived two major wars and several minor ones, as well as a doctor's prognosis of early death, so he was not likely to mistake the shape of mortality. He was also not a man to miss an appointment.

I saw him for the last time in the late spring of that year. He was living in the two-room house near Haifa, where he had settled after retiring from his job as a stock clerk in a button factory in New York. The house seemed much too large for him. He was tiny and frail. His skin was almost transparent and he was partly blind, but his shirt was creaseless and his shoes brightly polished. I was wilted and dusty in the afternoon heat. In the sunlight, I could see the cat hairs permanently embedded in the weave of my clothes. As my uncle might have said, I looked as if I'd just stepped out of the cow's mouth. But there was no point in making comparisons. Although we were blood relations and carried the same name, we were so far divided in time that we might as well have been different species. I was born after Europe had nearly succeeded in destroying itself, and he was born when it still seemed indestructible, in the fiftieth year of Kaiser Franz-Josef's long reign over Austria-Hungary. The Kaiser's subjects, even in the easternmost reaches of the Empire where my uncle lived, knew what was required of them, and long after most people had forgotten about the Empire, my uncle still kept the old ways. For eighty-five years, he never left his house without a tie and hat and never used the Galitzianer Yiddish second person familiar pronoun, *di*, to anyone outside his immediate family.

He gave me my first practical lesson in anthropology. When I was seventeen or eighteen, during one of his Sunday afternoon visits, I decided to civilize the family. I had already studied Margaret Mead and

Fannie Peczenik writes on Milton's Paradise Lost, *translates Yiddish poetry, and is presently working on a volume of short stories. She lives in Frascati, Italy, with her husband and two cats.*

Ruth Benedict, but I had read so many novels and seen so many movies that I had no doubts about what I was doing. I came into the living room with two cups of tea, one for him and one for my father. My father took his cup without a word; my uncle hesitated, then took his with a sigh.

"Fannie, you've made a mistake." He spoke gently. He did not like to be disagreeable. "Coffee is served in a cup. Tea is served in a glass."

"But in America we drink both out of a cup." I felt more than slightly superior.

"Then they are wrong here. Tea is always served in a glass."

The next week I served him his tea in a glass, but I drank my own from a cup. Sometimes, more out of spite than preference, I put milk in my tea instead of lemon, but I had lost my self-assurance. I made no more attempts to propagate Western culture.

I knew his customs and his habits but I knew little else about him. No one, least of all he, found it necessary to tell me if he had ever been married or had children. And by the time I grew up, I found it impossible to tell him about myself. Everything about my haphazard, mid-1970's graduate student life would have seemed terrible to him. He came from a remote, measured past, where there were immutable laws of cause and effect, beginning and end, right and wrong. I lived in the chaos of an

Tom Dunham

incomprehensible present, where anything could happen at any time, or at least that was the general hope. So our conversations were, by a tacit agreement, limited and predictable. We restricted ourselves to neutral topics, health, work, politics, in phrases that were more formulaic than spontaneous. Besides, his English was halting and I professed, at the time, to have forgotten all of my Yiddish.

I did not mind the formality because I loved him for the ordered rhythms of his life. When I was small his regular Sunday afternoon visits were as close as my family ever came to a holiday and as close as I ever came to magic, which, to my six- or seven-year-old mind, meant the prospect of a new coloring book. Each week, as soon as he had taken off his coat, he would search through his pockets, find a dime, and present it to me with strict injunction that I use if for "something nice," as though he did not know exactly what I would do. I would run down the four flights of stairs and around the corner to the nearest candy store, where there was always a good supply of new coloring books for sale. Once back home, I would set about carefully filling in the outlined pictures with my crayons.

I had a box of Crayola crayons with eight or ten colors, I forget how many, and I coveted the largest box which had forty-eight, but I never got one. My parents considered so many crayons extravagant and unnecessary; how many shades of violet could a child need? It never occurred to me to save my uncle's dimes so I could buy the crayons myself. He had told me to enjoy myself and I sensed that he would have been insulted if I set the money aside and waited, joyless, for weeks until I had enough to buy the full palette. I knew him as the dispenser of small joys, current pleasures, which were not to be sacrificed for the sake of some greater, distant joy that might, in the end, surfeit.

Many years later, when I brought a cat to board in my father's house for a while, my uncle, on his Sunday afternoon visit, searched through his pockets as he had done when I was little. Confused, I wondered if he was going to offer a coin to the cat. Instead, he produced a length of string which he dangled in the air, making wide concentric circles. The cat, delighted, gave chase and so the two entertained each other for the rest of the day. I do not know if my uncle had been told to expect the cat, but it would not surprise me if he went through life prepared to entertain a niece's large, golden-eyed tomcat or any other creature who

might come his way. Perhaps in the Kaiser's realm it had been incumbent upon a gentleman to have a concordant gift always at hand.

A month or two after my uncle died, my husband and I decided to spend a few weeks in Italy. We travelled, in our usual style, without reservations and this time it turned out to have been a mistake. We meant to go to Siena but, arriving in early evening, we discovered that all the hotels were booked solid, so we went on to Florence where, after a long search, we ended up in a vile room in a worse hotel normally reserved for guided tour groups. In the morning we were peremptorily put out of our room. The next hotel we found was only slightly better. A little bleak and demoralized, we left Florence after a cursory glance at our favorite monuments and set out for Venice.

The world is not small. It is large, so large that a coincidence, a chance encounter between people who share a bit of history, can seem intentional.

On the train, we found ourselves in a compartment with an elderly couple and a young woman. The three of them talked, as travelers do, of the weather, the towns along the way, where they were going and where they had been. As happens so frequently on Italian trains, it was not clear whether they had just met by chance or had known each other for a long time. After the rude hotel keepers in Florence, it was a relief to be in the presence of simple conviviality. When the young woman left, the couple turned their attention to us, our basic, I.A. Richards' Italian-Through-Pictures vocabulary notwithstanding. By way of introduction, they told us what had brought them on this trip. They had been to visit a grandchild in Florence and they were going home to Trieste. Did we know Trieste? No, well, it was beautiful. If we had time while we were in Venice, we should go there. For me, one of the chief charms of Italy is that people love their hometowns and urge you to visit, knowing that you will not be disappointed. I have lived in too few places that I could recommend to a visitor.

Taking us deeper into confidence, the woman told us that they were old, very, very old, as old as the century itself. They had been married for fifty-three years and had so many grandchildren and great-grandchildren everywhere that they couldn't even be called grandparents anymore.

Janet Gnall

"*Non siamo nonni. Siamo antenati.*"

"We are not grandparents. We are ancestors."

We all laughed at the joke. They were, despite their age and venerable status, large and robust looking, still amused by the world. From their easy conversation, I sensed that they had lived their lives and lived them well. If I was right, perhaps they were forefather and foremother of an entire race of pink-cheeked, happy people. I hoped so, but, of course, I could only guess. It is not within the bounds of train conversation to make inquiries into the state of happiness or unhappiness of one's fellow passengers.

They wanted to know about us, too. All Americans came from somewhere else. Where did our *antenati* come from? Actually, we explained, we ourselves were the immigrants, my husband from Canada, of a family long, long ago from Scotland, and I, from Austria, of a family not so long ago from Poland.

"Austria?" the man asked me. Did I speak the Viennese dialect?

"Well, yes, as a matter of fact."

"I once lived in Vienna when I was a child." With a wink to me, he spoke in a clear Viennese German. In Vienna, the umlauts are silky, the harsh gutturals soft. It is the language of a dimly remembered happiness; the voice of my nanny, the voices of my playmates, the voice of my mother speaking to strangers, the voices I heard until I was four years old when I found out that German and Yiddish were not the only two languages in the world. There, on the flat plain of the Veneto, suddenly freed from the constraints of the Italian I hardly knew, I felt as if I had found something I had not known I had lost.

"It was during the first war. There was fighting near Trieste. I was a flüchtling." Did I know what a *flüchtling* was?

Refugee. I know the word well.

"Yes." I answered. "I was also a *flüchtling* in Vienna when I was a child." The old man, the *antenato*, and I had this and more in common. While he took refuge in Vienna, my uncle was lying in the Kaiser's trenches. I do not meet my uncle's compatriots very often.

"Small world, isn't it?" I almost said, but I wasn't sure that the phrase has any idiomatic meaning in Italian. I'm glad I didn't say it because it isn't true. The world is not small. It is large, so large that a coincidence, a chance encounter between people who share a bit of history, can seem intentional.

My uncle was dead, but fate or chance had given me a gift when I thought that there would be no more. On a train far from home, I met a stranger who still remembered the days of Franz-Josef and spoke a few words in a language I once loved. It was a small, incidental gift, but like the ones my uncle used to bring me every Sunday, it seemed to promise another gift next week and the week after, an eternity of coins for children and strings for cats, or perhaps even an eternity itself where no memory is ever lost.

The Way of Prayer

We have produced a small booklet, with the above title, for the many readers who have asked us for specific suggestions about prayer: when, where, and how to pray; what prayers to offer; what to expect from prayer; is it effective? How does one go about forming a small, in-home spiritual or prayer group? Booklets are $2 each (actual cost). For copies, write Fellowship in Prayer, 291 Witherspoon Street, Princeton, N.J. 08542.

I Want Only You

That I want You, only You—let my heart repeat without end. All desires that distract me, day and night, are false and empty to the core.

As the night keeps hidden in its gloom the petition for light, even thus in the depth of my unconsciousness rings the cry—I want You, only You.

As the storm still seeks its end in peace when it strikes against peace with all its might, even thus my rebellion strikes against Your love and still its cry is—I want You, only You.

Rabindranath Tagore

You Are Enough

As the rain hides the stars, as the autumn mist hides the hills, as the clouds veil the blue of the sky, so the dark happenings of my lot hide the shining of Your face from me. Yet, if I may hold Your hand in the darkness, it is enough. Since I know that, though I may stumble in my going, You do not fall.

Traditional Gaelic Prayer

Reveal Yourself, O God

Reveal Yourself to me, reveal Yourself to me.
I seek not wealth nor power, I yearn to see You alone.
O God, I care not for renunciation or enjoyment, I yearn to see You alone.
O God, I am neither anxious for home, nor for the forest of life;
I only yearn to see You.
Yes, I seek for nought save You, O God, I yearn for Your vision alone; grant my prayer.

Dadu, 16th century Hindu

Not Alone After All

IRVING B. MACE

First his friends went. Then his job. Then his dignity as a human being. Even his youth was lost in an endless state of chemically induced oblivion. Here is an almost unbelievable—but true—story of a miraculous recovery from drug and alcohol addiction. How did it happen? Through surrender to "A Power Greater Than Oneself."

For the last eight years of my twenty year hard-core addiction to drugs and alcohol, I could not work. My disease had me convinced that I'd never again be able to hold a regular job. It seemed an impossibility that I would ever learn to live beyond the mindless chemical self-abuse I had accustomed myself to. Maybe other people got to escape their chemical torment, but not me. I was much too old—forty-one at the time—and much too addicted. Heroin, cocaine, and vodka, among other chemicals, had become my primary family support system; a system I had become willing to die for.

The above, for today at least, is little more than history. On April 16, 1992, I will be celebrating seven years in recovery. My negative and chemically instilled mind-set has been replaced by a Power greater than anything I could have imagined. I now work at living a life that each day brings truly humbling rewards. HUMILITY, I now know was the missing ingredient in my life. Due to the insidiousness of chemicals, I had actually believed that I alone was in some way the center of the universe.

I had been consumed by a diabolical paradox that had to be overcome. In spite of my wretched appearance and nearly burnt-out mind, deep down inside I blazed away with conceit and self-centeredness. My already overly inflated ego had for years been chemically enhanced. Lesser mortals owed me a living, along with special status normally reserved for the gods. "They" were the reason for my problems to begin with. If only they knew how to act around me, life would be much easier.

After having lived through a sufficient amount of pain, a more spiritual paradox manifested itself in my life; one that would afford me the humility I so desperately needed: In order to win (recover), I had to

A writer, columnist, and addictions consultant, Irving Mace devotes his time to helping men and women recover from addiction. He lives in Palmer, MA.

surrender to my disease. In order to gain real power, I had to first admit my powerlessness. In order to discover how truly unique I am, I had to accept how common I was. My road to enlightenment began with prayers, a self-help fellowship meeting, and a mop.

Other recovering addicts and alcoholics told me to go out and get a job; any job. They said, "Get off welfare and stop crying about not being able to work." A nearby state school for the profoundly retarded hired me as a porter to do cleaning; a job I had said I'd never do. Because of my long history of substance abuse, few people wanted anything to do with me, much less pay me to work for them. Thanks to a local state representative who vouched for me, I got the job. He had apparently seen something in me that I couldn't yet see in myself. Not long after I began earning a clean living cleaning dirty rooms, my patron representative died as a direct result of his own bout with alcoholism.

The first few weeks on the job dragged by like an extended nightmare in which demons actively sought my destruction. I craved a drink or a drug with every heavily burdened step I took. Without some mind-altering something to motivate me forward, there were times when I thought I'd literally die on the spot. I wasn't used to even trying to make it on my own, much less believing that I would actually succeed. My whole life

Tom Dunham

had been one of deviant behavior and delusion, formed by chemical negativity. Now, here I was living in a world where nothing made sense, especially my not at least taking a drink to get over the hump—something that always made perfect sense.

At nights the pressure was even worse because I didn't know how to sleep without chemical arms wrapped around me. I would toss and turn until early morning when all I had to look forward to was a mop and bucket. Without intending to, I would find myself praying to God during the long black silence of night. I had been told by other recovering people that I must come to my own understanding of God, one that, if allowed, could become even more intimate than was my past relationship with drugs and alcohol. It was strongly suggested that I must admit a Higher Power into my life, just as I had with chemicals. Drugs and alcohol had always proved to be powers greater than myself. I needed something more powerful than drugs and alcohol.

"Please don't let me pick up a drink or a drug," I would silently pray as my wife slept soundly beside me. "All I want to do is earn an honest living and enjoy things like mowing the lawn. I don't want the false glory. I need help. I can't do it on my own. I've tried and failed too many times. What must I do?"

In the morning I would go to work and clean rooms, tired, but thankful for still being clean. By attending meetings, praying and working, I was slowly beginning to see the filth disappear from far more than just the floors. Each new day without chemicals seemed to make me stronger in ways essential to my recovery, and indeed, life itself.

After being a porter for more than a year, I had apparently proven myself worthy enough to be actively involved with the residents. I took a risk and accepted a promotion to instructor/trainer. I was to work with some of the most severe cases of mental retardation imaginable. It soon became obvious that I had a way with these people. As it turned out, however, they taught me much more than I could ever teach them.

Patience was something quite foreign to me. My disease was one of instant gratification. If it wasn't for my work with the retarded, I believe I'd still be living life as though caught in a traffic jam, with no way out. Residents also taught me to respect and appreciate all human beings; not just the ones I more easily felt comfortable with.

Along the way, another paradox had become understood: By helping others I help myself. The amount of help I'd get appeared to be directly

Brooks Walsh

proportionate to the amount of help I'd give. I always believed that what goes around comes around, but I thought it had to do only with retribution.

After another year I left my retarded friends to take a position as a drug rehabilitation counselor at a brand new treatment facility that was opening up in the area. At the time, I was taking college courses in the hopes of one day being a counselor. The sudden job offer seemed to be an opportunity of a lifetime. Four months later I just as suddenly lost the position and for no apparent reason.

I was perplexed, out of work, and my academic education had come to an abrupt end. I was surprised, however, by my own obvious lack of dismay. By now I had established a personal relationship with a friendly and loving Higher Power that I trusted in. All I had to do was not look for chemical answers to a relatively small problem. I knew I'd be okay.

For most of my life I wanted to be a writer. My disease, when active, always told me to forget about writing. It was a ridiculous notion coming from a ridiculous junkie whose lot in life was only to do drugs and hurt people. Now that I was clean, the severely wounded voice of my disease was unable to talk as loud. Another much stronger voice started telling me to go for it, especially now that I had been given the time.

If I, Irving Bennett Mace, could do cleaning for forty hours a week, learn to love retarded peole while being taught patience, and could at once face the sudden loss of both his livelihood and education, I most certainly could write a book, especially since I did it all without the usual chemical backbone supporting me. I could probably write two books; a dozen books; a thousand books.

Five years have passed. I'm just now cleaning up the one book. Just as I learned to pray one prayer at a time, clean an entire building one spot at a time, and stay away from chemicals one day at a time, so have I learned to write a book one word at a time. To this day I have never seriously studied writing. In fact, English 101 is not even listed on my transcript. I learned to write by writing. However, if I had known what it would take to actually write an entire book, I probably would have never started. The same could be said of my recovery, and in fact, life itself. I get to know what I need to know, and only when I need to know it. Anything beyond that I probably couldn't handle anyway.

One year after beginning my book, *The Mind of an Addict*, I sold a local newspaper publisher on an idea for a weekly column having to do with

an addict's perspective on substance abuse and its treatment. Since 1988 I've been writing, "Ask R.J." (recovering junkie). It currently runs in three papers, and is in the extremely slow process of being nationally syndicated. I'm in no rush however.

The public appearance of the "Ask R.J." newspaper column gave me reason to establish an addictions consulting office under the same name. We've officially incorporated an innovative organization intended to be one of nonprofit help to as much of the world as possible. On November 14, 1991, I received a commendation for my work from the Governor of Massachusetts, William F. Weld. He said in part, "I commend you for your dedicated effort to help others, and for having made this the focal point of your recovery. I urge you to persevere in bringing your message to a broader audience." After speaking of global indifference, Governor Weld went on to say: "Bringing change is a difficult and often lonely pursuit." I now profoundly realize that there can be no greater "alone" than to be without God. Had I remained that alone, I'm certain that I'd have been an out-of-control addict and alcoholic for the rest of my life. "THERE BUT FOR THE GRACE OF GOD GO I."

The Spring Has Come

Behold, my friends, the spring has come;
The earth has received the embraces of the sun
And we shall soon see the results of that love!
Every seed is awakened and so has all animal life.
It is through this mysterious power that we too have our being
And we therefore yield to our neighbors,
Even our animal neighbors,
The same right as ourselves, to inhabit this land.

SITTING BULL

Exultant Hymn of Praise

Come kneel with me before the altar rail
of earth, wind-carved, worn satin smooth by time,
for day has come; the leaven of my joy
has swelled my heart to bursting with the sun.
I cannot keep a soul in human bonds
when all the world is washed by heaven's light,
when bird and tree and stone and blade of grass
sing into being with the death of night.
Slow down with me, communing in this hour;
accept creation's wonder, wrapped in gold
and shimmering with bows of butterflies—
then light a candle worthy of the gift.
Thanksgiving wells within me; all my days
shall be as one exultant hymn of praise.

EMMA S. MCLAUGHLIN

Rock Ritual V

ROBERT O'ROURKE

Here is another in our widely acclaimed series of Rock Rituals. May it "lead you to the rock that is higher than you."

Through the canyons,
across the prairies,
and above the mesas
Echoes an ancient lyric—
the Psalm of a shepherd. . .
From the ends of the earth
will I call to thee;
When my heart is overwhelmed:
Lead me to the rock that is
higher than I (Ps 61.2).

This same song reverberates in the hearts of the Hopi when they retire to their Black Mesa to pray. It resounds again with the Sioux as they seek solace in the Black Hills. And with the Arapaho in the silences of Medicine Mountain.

My path through life has led me to sacred places, quiet spaces. One of these, Pawnee Buttes, rises prayerfully out of the grasslands of Colorado. I go there "to the rock that is higher than I" for sanctuary. And there I meditate on the words of the Jewish shepherd boy and those of the great Indian chief Seattle.

> There is no quiet place in the white man's cities. No place to hear the leaves of spring or the rustle of insects' wings . . . Perhaps because I am a savage and do not understand, . . . the (city) clutter only seems to insult my ears. And what is there to life if a man cannot hear the lovely cry of a whippoorwill or the arguments of the frogs around a pool at night? The Indian prefers the soft sound of the wind darting over the face of the pond, and the smell of the wind itself cleansed by a midday rain, or scented with a pinon pine. The air is precious to the redman. For all things share the same breath—the beasts, the trees, the human.

A consummate wordsmith, Bob O'Rourke makes his home in Colorado where he also carves Santos, *statues of the saints revered by the people of New Mexico and the southwest. Lisa A. Smith, whose illustrations accompany "Rock Ritual V," is a Colorado artist and creator of "Spirit Stone Fetishes"—stones embellished with silver, turquoise and other materials.*

I gain strength from a rock, a peace that heals my anxious mind. Closer to the sky and sun I discover warmth that fills my heart. And, sometimes, like the Indian of an earlier time, I leave an offering:

a pinch of cornmeal,
a few leaves of herbs,
or smoke from a small fire,

symbols of thanks for the sacred earth, our mother, who provides sheltering places.

Does not all humankind need sacramental places? If not a mountain, rock, tree or stream perhaps a solitary place known only to ourselves, separate from the world, set apart for quiet ritual. A homing place to center our lives, a space for God, a rock higher than I.

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Francis of Assisi

JEROME F. MEGNA

Early in the 13th century, St. Francis of Assisi renounced his upper middle class lifestyle for the sake of simplicity, service, and prayer. Today more and more people, disillusioned with science, unfulfilled by materialism, are listening carefully to his compelling ideas about "poverty."

A psychologist at the University of Chicago* has tried for twenty years to identify with scientific exactness what people mean when they say they are enjoying themselves. This same psychologist focused on one aspect of the experience of enjoyment which he termed "flow." Flow, he claimed, is a state of concentration that amounts to absolute absorption in an activity. For people in this state, action flows effortlessly and they feel strong, alert and unself-conscious. Flow is that feeling you have when you are in command of the present and performing at the peak of your ability. Time stands still. A split second takes forever. Dancers know they are in the flow when they transcend themselves and experience a heightened awareness of their bodies. Painters know it when they enter into a private dialogue with the canvas. Some surgeons know it during surgery, athletes during a game, and writers while writing.

* Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi, in *Flow: The Psychology of Optimal Experience*—Ed.

Jerome Megna is Dean of the School of Education and Human Services at Rider College in Lawrenceville, New Jersey. A Professor of Education, he has published over 25 books and articles, presented over 50 papers at scholarly conferences throughout the United States, is active with numerous professional organizations and serves on many boards.

I suspect that Francis of Assisi must have felt this transcendence one day early in his life when he removed his clothes before the Bishop of Assisi and shocked onlookers, handed them to his disconsolate father (who expected his son to follow in his own upper-middle-class footsteps) and pledged to live a life according to the words of the gospel, "Go, sell what you have, give to the poor, and come follow Me." Through this act Francis renounced all earthly possessions and dedicated himself to follow in the footsteps of his Lord. The rest of his life focused on this renunciation of earthly possessions. So seriously did he take his love affair with poverty that whenever someone in his ever-expanding order of monks made the mistake of insisting that the brothers had a proper place to sleep, to pray and to take food, Francis would protest. He would remind his brothers that God would provide.

"That which is essential is invisible to the eye."

To look at Francis through the prism of our own age makes him seem a madman. Why would one slavishly pursue the ideal of poverty? Indeed, in our own time we have had governmental wars against poverty. What must have entered Francis' mind when he read the gospel, "The foxes have their dens, the birds of the air their nests, but the Son of Man has no place to lay His head?" His goal was to rid himself of the baggage of material goods, wealth, property of any kind—and, most important, the desire for them—so that he could better devote himself to doing good in a world in which good was not found everywhere. Throughout his life, Francis embraced lepers, outcasts, and scoundrels, and in our own age, his followers tend the AIDS patient, help the homeless, comfort the inconsolable, and teach the unlearned. There are more men and women today who call themselves Franciscans that there are in any other order within Christianity. But what would prompt great numbers of people to follow someone like Francis who not only believed in doing good but also in renouncing any attachment to worldly goods? Do not most of us believe that human beings consider the primary motivation behind all people's actions to be the attainment of some material benefit, whether it be a monetary gain, a possession, a symbol of power or prestige? How is it that someone like Francis of Assisi, who held these things in such contempt, could create a following which has swelled increasingly from the thirteenth century to the twentieth?

Janet Gnall

The idea of bringing peace and love to the world consumed Francis. For him, attachments to and concerns about worldly goods only encumbered this ideal. He believed that by devoting himself to poverty he could accomplish his true mission in this life: to do good, to love others, to help the poor, to improve the conditions of his society. The many people who followed him also felt that to focus on material gain in human interaction could only hinder a person's primary reason for being on this earth: to do good where it does not exist. Francis was one of the few founders of religious orders who encouraged lay people to follow his example. Indeed, many did and lived in the spirit if not the perfection of poverty. This Third Order Secular of St. Francis, made up of lay people, recognize that while it is necessary and often satisfying to make a living, it is more important to make a difference.

Although we are all born into "belief systems" of one kind or another, there occurs at some point in our lives the opportunity to choose one over another. What was true in the thirteenth century about personal belief systems is no so different from what is true today: we can believe that material gain should be the focus of our lives. If we pursue this particular belief system, then everything which we do, every person with whom we share our personal or professional lives must in some way add to our stature, our prestige, our personal gain. On the other hand, we can believe that our purpose on this earth is to bring joy, harmony, peace and love to it. Pursuing this belief system leads to entirely different human interactions. Some might say that these goals are not necessarily incompatible. For Francis and his followers they were. He once even yelled at a young monk who had his superior's permission to own a prayer book and had hoped to win Francis' consent to such property-holding. But to Francis, any concern over material goods only distracted him from what he considered the Brothers' primary mission, summed up in words borrowed from the Old Testament and made into his own personal prayer:

Lord, make me an instrument of Your peace.
Where there is hatred, let me sow love;
Where there is injury, pardon;
Where there is doubt, faith;
Where there is despair, hope;
Where there is darkness, light, and
Where there is sadness, joy.

O, Divine Master, grant that I may not so much seek to be
consoled as to console;
To be understood as to understand;
To be loved as to love;
For it is in giving that we receive;
It is in pardoning that we are pardoned;
And it is in dying that we are born to eternal life.

A simple story told about Francis says much more about the devotion to humanity, cultivated civility and genuine love of his fellow mortals which he held so strongly in his heart. It seems that towards the end of his life, Francis often arose in the middle of the night and walked quietly to the chapel where, in the darkness and solitude, he prayed in silence to his God. Sometimes these vigils lasted several hours, whereupon Francis would return from the chapel to his small cell and await the morning call to community prayer, Mass and meditation.

One evening, in a small monastery in which he was then staying, one of the very new younger brothers awoke from his sleep because of hunger pains and, even though it was considered an infraction of the rules, made his way to the kitchen to alleviate the hunger he was experiencing. He grabbed from the pantry anything that would somehow satiate his appetite and, although consumed with remorse at his own violation of what he knew to be the rules of the monastery, filled himself with bread, left-over gruel, some scraps of cheese, whatever he could find that would abate the hunger in his body.

As it happened, Francis had to pass through this kitchen area at the end of one of his private nocturnal vigils of prayer. When the young monk suddenly saw him, it is not difficult to imagine how the food must have stuck in his throat. He was speechless, but less from the nourishment in his mouth than from the profound sense of fear, embarrassment and humiliation at having been discovered by none other than the saintly founder of the order which the young man had just recently joined.

Francis looked up, smiled, greeted the monk politely and asked if he might not share in the modest repast. Astounded, the young brother happily gave Francis half of what was left. The poor man of Assisi shared the food with his confrere not out of his own sense of hunger, but out of his profound desire not to have the young man feel shamed by his surprised discovery.

We know that Francis was never blessed with a hearty appetite. How-

Tom Dunham

ever, he managed to eat the midnight snack with the brother, breaking not only the rule of abstinence from food between meals but the rule of the "grand silence," forbidding the monks to talk with anyone from the time of reciting evening prayers before retiring until after Mass the following morning. In his own hierarchy of values, it was more important for Francis to make his brother feel comfortable than it was to make him feel guilty at having been caught in breaking a rule of the order.

It is small wonder that this little poor man of Assisi had the following he had in his day and continues to have in our own. He was a man of ideals, compassion, and extraordinary love. Being born into an upper-middle-class family, he voluntarily renounced his birthright and lived a life of simplicity, abject poverty and prayer. In spite of personal hardships, harrowing poverty and intense physical pain he attained joy in life. That joy enabled him to transcend earthly considerations. Indeed, so intense was Francis' spirituality, his ecstasy in prayer, his love for his fellow mortals, that he became absolutely consumed by his activities. Today's psychologist would term this kind of human experience "flow," that state of concentration which approaches absolute absorption in an activity.

For Francis, his action flowed effortlessly from his personal belief system. Even in a physically weakened state, he felt strong, alert and un-self-conscious, in command of the present and performing at the peak of his ability. For him, time literally stood still.

Something can be said for the fact that every age requires a perspective which is different from the norm. In an age of precise measurement and inordinate quantification of material things, we could use more of the spirit of Francis. We need to be reminded, as the twentieth century novelist, Antoine de Saint Exupery, tells us in *The Little Prince*, "That which is essential is invisible to the eye." For Francis and his followers, what was essential in life had less to do with what one had than it did with how one cared. This quality, of course, was unmeasurable, un-quantifiable and, in the face of the materialist, counted for nothing. For Francis and the seven centuries of brothers and sisters who followed him, the characteristic of caring for others was the achievement of that enjoyment which modern day psychologist call "flow," the kind of self-actualization which comes from the knowing that the talents and gifts within them matched the challenges and demands of their everyday lives.

From Prayers to Prayer

KAREN RUSHEN

Two minutes with a tiny old woman in a South Korean temple have lasted a lifetime.

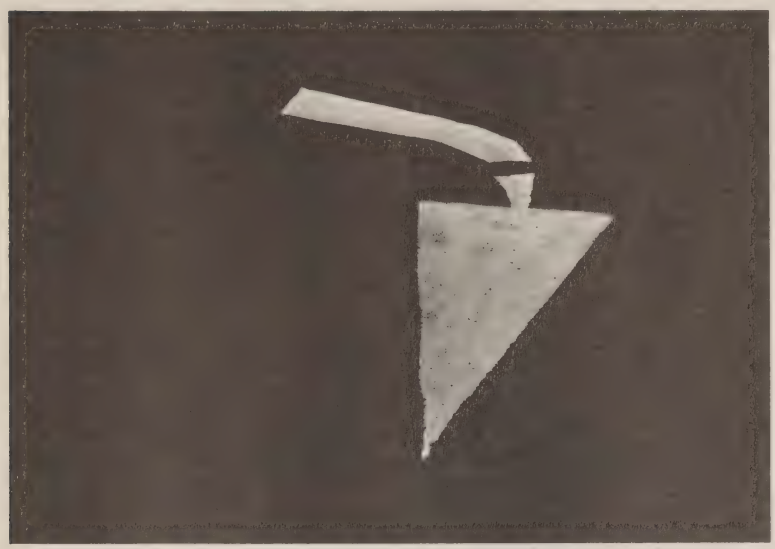
Please send the story of your own "transforming experience" to the Editor, 291 Witherspoon St., Princeton, NJ 08542.

When I was thirteen I had an experience that changed the way I looked at God from that day forward. At that time, my family and I lived in South Korea, where my father, an engineer, was helping to open a new factory. My mother, who loved to learn about history and art, insisted upon frequent family excursions to the various local Buddhist temples where, guidebook in hand, she would take in all the details of the temple art and architecture, explaining to us the meanings of the bronze and carven imagery adorning the temple gates and buildings.

Being thirteen, I loved to exercise my independence on such occasions, wandering a safe distance to savor the situation alone with my own thoughts. In this way I one day happened upon a small side building of a local temple in which a tiny old woman was praying.

At first I didn't give her much attention, as I wandered to the front of the room to get a good look at the bronze Buddha image surrounded by offerings of incense, fruit, flowers and sweet cakes. Yet when I glanced at the woman, kneeling before the image, my heart skipped a beat. She was so caught up in the act of praying that her face, its features softened in an expression of deep joy and quiet ecstacy, literally glowed. Though her hands moved slowly in graceful gestures of what appeared to be supplication, there seemed to be about her a solid confidence, and a sure intimacy between her and the deity before her that I couldn't help but be speechless with wonder.

Raised in the Catholic tradition, I had made the smug assumption tht God only spoke to Christian people and only answered Christian prayers, even though the nuns who had instructed me assured us children that God loved all good people everywhere no matter what beliefs they held. Still, this woman was enlivened by God in a way I had never



Tom Dunham

seen before—her belief looked so deep, so certain, so sweet that I felt an ache of envy go through me. How I had struggled with the boredom and repetition of prayer and praying, and yet here was a woman who had somehow, in some manner broken through and found in praying a rich, living dialogue, and an intimate relationship with her God.

At some point, this little Korean woman caught sight of me, staring at her in so intrusive a manner, and a warm smile spread over her face. She beckoned for me to join her, and, placing her hands in the posture of prayer, gestured towards the Buddha image with a look of knowing confidence. I was totally undone by embarrassment yet felt a desperate desire to in some way experience what this woman experienced, so, after looking around me to be sure I wasn't being watched, I knelt self-consciously in front of the bronze image and tried to form a petition.

I prayed something like this: God, don't strike me dead if kneeling before this Buddhist image is some form of Christian heresy. Please see that my intentions are sincere, that this woman knows you in a way that I want to know you, so that your knowledge radiates from within me and all over me, so that I really *know* you, not just in formal prayers and doctrine, but intimately, like a good and well-loved friend. No feelings

of ecstasy swept me off my feet, but in my heart I felt a tiny warm stirring, not unlike a smile, that was the beginning of something between God and me: an understanding and a quest.

I wish I could end in saying that I have succeeded in my quest, but I have a long, long way to go in my journey. Still, I had a glimpse of my destination in the face of that small Korean woman, and that knowledge still fires my heart and pushes me onward.

Members of Fellowship in Prayer in 80 countries form a global spiritual community of men and women—many of whom organize groups or correspond with each other in order to share spiritual insights and to pray together. If you would like to hear from or write to people in our Interfaith Network, please send your name and address to us at 291 Witherspoon Street, Princeton, NJ 08542, and we will list it in our next issue.

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Renewing a Marriage

WALTER REINSDORF

Today 50% of married couples sustain a lifelong relationship. Here is the story of one fortunate husband and wife who learned that listening, self-disclosure and commitment can keep a partnership alive for a lifetime.

Many years ago a young couple stopped at a store in Arizona on their way to California. They had been married in New York only a few days before. Joyously happy, they were living off the money collected at their wedding reception, carelessly thrown into the glove compartment of their Chevie. In the store the young husband's hungry eye was caught by a big box of Hyde Park cookies. Yielding to temptation, he bought the cookies against the wishes of his bride who thought it extravagant. Off they went. She drove. He read, munching his cookies guiltily. The Chevie wound on through the mountains in a driving rain. Darkness settled in. Finally, she asked him for a cookie. Now was his chance. He refused her. And the fight, their first, was on. Silly wasn't it? Two young people in love, with no pressures or responsibilities, fighting over a cookie. It happened.

One cookie cannot wreck a marriage. Yet their argument shows the effect of stubborn pride, the bane of man and woman since Adam and Eve. Our young husband wanted to teach his wife a lesson. Eventually, he learned the lesson. She would not take no for an answer. Off they went, on they fought, and loved. Fortunately, they stayed on the road. Only for the time being. They didn't learn anything. We can. Other people's arguments are ridiculous. Ours shake and damage us. This young couple, their first argument ended, but not forgotten, drove on into the rain, on into their lives. Ahead they knew not what: either the tragedy of divorce, or a long life devoted to each other. Their argument which showed only pride also illustrates another phenomenon of false communication. Happy and in love, they shared the front seat of a car alone in a desolate area, yet they fought. Repeated arguments can kill a mar-

A poet and essayist, Walter Reinsdorf has published in the National Catholic Reporter, *the* Journal of Ecumenical Studies, Communication Quarterly *and many other journals and magazines.*

riage. While back then that couple could assume they would stay together, today no one can safely make that same assumption.

Never before in any society have so many with so much found so many reasons to break up their marriages. The figures speak for themselves: divorces and annulments, increasing since 1963, crossed the million mark in 1975 for the first time. The number continues to go up. We are in the center of a great cultural phenomenon whose causes are as obscure as the results are certain. Divorce grows among the married. Fewer of the young enter into marriage, and, increasingly, even those who have been long married are not exempt from the hazards of separation. Assuming that most of us still want a life-long, satisfying commitment to bring joy to our youth and comfort to our old age, why do otherwise well-intentioned decent people find it difficult to stay married? Marriage is the very bond of the social order. Without it society, religion, the nation, all human order will perish.

While it is true that each of us is distinct with individual needs, the married have agreed to overcome that natural isolation. Even in Eden Adam couldn't make it alone. Discord begins with the tendency to slip back into that individual isolation, walled in by pride, frequently hurt. In all marriages, however, a common ground exists for communication. Even enemies must meet to fight on the same ground. From this shared communality, dialogue, the bridger of separation, can come. When one partner seeks to reveal him or herself to the other, dialogue starts. As we speak, listen and respond we become bound together. As we are bound together, each reveals self to the other. That is the beginning of mutual understanding. Given our shared experience, what inhibits communication between otherwise good people who love each other?

Let's assume that our young newly weds have continued on, as indeed they did, into mid-life, gathering careers, a family, a house, and with it more to tempt and divide them than a box of cookies. Their arguments did not go away. If anything, they grew more fierce and frequent. He, convinced that he was struggling to support a family alone and unappreciated; she, just as convinced that she was trapped at home, bound to children and a stranger she could not talk with. Not much to look forward to at the end of the day for either one.

Like many others, this couple was raised in a culture which taught them that acceptance and admiration meant being bright, witty, articulate, certainly not the opposite, silent and observant. The silent were

Janet Gnall

pushed to the outer circle while the articulate held the center. Yet in a busy marriage where was the center? And who was at the center when both partners wanted only to be understood? Who would do the understanding?

One night after a busy day when her weary husband was about to settle down in front of another night baseball game, she told him that she had a gift for him. He, distracted, but mildly pleased, paused long enough to turn to her. Asking him to wait a minute, she left the room to return with a box in her hand, a box of Hyde Park cookies. He took it, saw, remembered, and smiled. When she said she wanted to talk to him about something, the tone of her voice made him stop smiling. He listened out of scared curiosity, and out it all came. Not a pretty story. Not an unusual one either. All her frustration with his indifference, his anger, and his lack of concern came out. Through it all, he listened, stunned, waiting for a chance to interject his defense, or his attack, whichever came first. After all, one accusation deserved another. Had that happened then the vicious circle their marriage spun in would have continued, probably not forever. But he did listen. Maybe she spoke too quickly. Maybe he just felt bad. Nevertheless, he began to see as she had seen, to listen as she had listened to his rage and sad frustration. Somehow, he found the good grace to shut up.

On the TV the game continued unobserved. Fortunately, their marriage did too, although it might not have. What happened? Nothing. Nothing too startling, but it was everything. He learned to listen. A small thing, perhaps. So simple. Yet not so simple, and not a small thing. Not if it can save a marriage. A large claim? Not if you consider a few things about the difficulty and the power of listening.

The difficulty first. Listening is not easy. If it was, more would listen, and fewer would want to speak. We hesitate to speak because we fear rejection either from impatience, or, worse, condemnation. Listeners listen. They do not judge. They do not argue. Listening contributes to the speaker's self-solution by saying nothing. Listening turns the speaker back on self.

In biting back the urge to interject, to advise, even to condemn, the listener gives him or herself to the other. That giving is an act of love. Dialogue, that is speaking and listening, creates a unity of being, draws us together, pulls us up and out from the "other" everyday world where we are apart into a moment of communion. In that moment we create

each other through recognizing the other. By addressing that other we recognize that he or she is a person, not an object. And, at the same time, listening to that other helps not only to form the speaker, but also the unselfish self. Dialogue has that power.

Finally, through creative listening we imitate God the ultimate listener. God listens, and God waits. God draws us upward through the sublime power of listening. Dialogue with God and with those we love is the necessary bread of life. Without it we starve.

Our good wife stooped to offer her husband the cookie he had refused her in that car long ago. And he accepted it.

Ask Angela

BARBARA ACKERMAN

Do you have a question of the heart or spirit that needs attention? Angela, our canine sage-in-residence, would love to help. Please write to her in care of FiP, 291 Witherspoon St., Princeton, NJ 08542, and she will give you her answer in our next issue.

Dear Angela,

Could you please share with us your thoughts and feelings concerning loneliness? Thank you.

Sincerely,
Only the Lonely

Dear Only,

Thank you very much for your question. It gives me the opportunity to speak about this important issue.

I am sure most of us feel lonesome from time to time and wonder what to do, or wonder how to be brave, noble, *and* lonely all at once. Sometimes we may feel lonely in a crowded room, or we may be having the time of our lives all by our lonesome, not feeling lonely at all. Loneliness may be the feeling we carry with us while we are busy, or it may be the reason we are not busy at all.

In recent months, in my own life, I have felt more lonely than I once did. I have been offered helpful hints by concerned canine acquaintances on my block. "Get out there and sniff the good sniff,"or "get out there and do something about those lonelies," they offer eagerly. Though helpful and well-meaning, I find it *too cold* out there, and when I do go out, I want to do something quickly and come back in. It's cold, I'm old,

and I want my blanket. My canine acquaintances further suggest I volunteer for community service by joining a pets-for-people program, where pets like me visit older people in nursing homes and senior centers. This is indeed noble work. But I am already a pet for people, three of them to be exact, not to mention a pet part-time for one person and other members of the family. Isn't being a pet for four people enough? How many people must I be a pet for?

> Though I have no scientific proof of it, most times when I help another soul with their lonely feelings, I seem to misplace my own.

Perhaps there are others who feel as I do. In our society today, there seems to be a lot of loneliness, yet at the same time we are made to feel that our loneliness must be fixed, or that we must learn to live with loneliness gracefully or better yet, that we're supposed to lose our loneliness. Now, I ask you, of what earthly good are your lonelies to you if you lose them? If you have lonely feelings, you should feel free to use them or at least get to choose whether you will use them or lose them. It is your right to feel lonely and not fix it, change it, or lose it. Being with loneliness is not the kiss of death. Do not waste energy on feeling lonely *and* feeling guilty that you're not doing anything to stop feeling lonely. Don't worry if you don't feel lonely and noble at the same time. Honor those lonely feelings. Cherish the loneliness. Celebrate your lonelies. How can this be accomplished? By faithfully following step by step the *Angela Method for the Celebration of Loneliness*. I have used all of the following techniques and activities to excellent advantage. Some of these are so engaging that I have actually forgotten my loneliness for three to seven minutes at a time. Other techniques listed here are designed for obtaining maximum benefit from the misery of loneliness. Finally, there are activities listed here that are pleasant ways to pass time while you are fully focused on feeling lonely. I hope this method of celebrating loneliness is as helpful to all those who try it as it has been for me.

The Angela Method for the Celebration of Loneliness

1) Pace from room to room feeling restless and agitated.
2) Putter to a room that has brought you great happiness and reward in the past, like the kitchen.

3) Get some water and a snack,
4) Make mischief.
5) Bark at the front door.
6) Create a ritual for any occasion and stick with it, incessantly.
7) Bark till you are feeling flustered, frantic, and frazzled.
8) Go to your sacred space, circle it three times, then plop yourself down.
9) Whimper.
10) Count your blessings, then count your fleas.
11) Howl at the moon.
12) Pull on your blanket and snorkel your way into its folds. Proceed to sneeze.
13) Snooze curled in a ball with paws over your nose. Proceed to snore.
14) Stretch and yawn.
15) Daydream.
16) Spend time on personal hygiene like chewing your tail *and* your nails.
17) Scratch and lick all of your itchy places.
18) Pray a little prayer.
19) Mentally focus on a big issue such as how many cedar-chip shavings make a dog's bed?
20) Ponder quietly and serenely a sweet mystery of life such as what is the sound of a thousand dog toenails clicking on a hardwood floor?

Although I have spent much time here on using your loneliness, I do not want to leave without briefly mentioning losing your loneliness.

When my buddy Barbara comes calling, I take my lonelies and crunch them into a ball and scrunch them into the folds of my blanket to save for later. When my buddy comes, I am willing to put my own loneliness aside. Sometimes my buddy has brought her own loneliness along on our walk. There is nothing that speaks to the heart of a pup more than the lonely feelings of a beloved. When Barbara leaves, I know she no longer feels lonely. Once more alone, I go back to my blanket and discover that my very own lonelies have disappeared as well. I check every fold, but my lonely feelings are nowhere to be found. Eventually, of course, my lonelies show up somewhere, especially if I really want them

to. But I pass this observation on to you. Though I have no scientific proof of it, most times when I help another soul with their lonely feelings, I seem to misplace my own.

I hope the Angela method is helpful to all those who use it. To all those with lonely feelings, I hope that you use them or lose them well.

Faithfully,
Angela

ON GROWING OLDER
by Eugene C. Bianchi, Crossroad, New York, 1985, 148 pages, paperback, $9.95.

In these moving meditations on aging Eugene C. Bianchi, professor of religion at Emory University, Atlanta, and author of the highly regarded *Aging As A Spiritual Journey*, helps us grow in wisdom and peace of soul as he leads us into our own discovery of the meaning and purpose of our life's journey.

In twenty-four reflections, he explores such crucial issues encountered by every individual in the aging process as transforming work, remembering ourselves, developing respect, opening to creativity, living truthfully, making friends/enemies, letting go, peacemaking elders, reclaiming nature, dealing with loneliness, suffering, loving, hoping, forgiving, cultivating joy, and being religious. Each chapter concludes with practical techniques, imagery and suggestions to help the reader to meditate on and personalize the themes discussed. A wise and helpful book! *PW*

SANCTUARIES: A GUIDE TO LODGINGS IN MONASTERIES, ABBEYS, AND RETREATS OF THE UNITED STATES
by Jack and Marcia Kelly, Bell Tower, New York, New York, 1991, 241 pages, paperback $13.00.

For many years, two New York City writers, Jack and Marion Kelly, have stopped off at monasteries and spiritual centers to enjoy a day or two of tranquil living—and perhaps to grasp more fully what it means to be a human being. Now they have written the first in a series of regional guides to these places of nourishment and peace. Each two-page profile—of more than 300 retreats—contains a delightful description, a drawing that invariably captures the charm of the setting, accommodations (with fees, which are always modest—much less than hotels), and directions to get there. Warm in tone and rich in feeling, this is a unique guidebook, well worth a journey in itself. An excellent resource for planning vacations, holidays and long weekends for many years to come. *MFG*

We welcome your comments. Please send them to The Editor, Fellowship in Prayer, 291 Witherspoon Street, Princeton, NJ 08542.

I enjoy reading your publication and thought your readers might like the enclosed statement from Emmet Fox.

> Nothing is more important and practical in lfe than getting nearer to God. As we get nearer to God, everything improves. We feel better; our work gets better; we are better neighbors and better citizens. When Jesus said, "But seek first God's kingdom and God's righteousness, and all these things will be added to you," he meant just that.
>
> Prayer is the way to get nearer to God and is the only true action in life. When we do not pray, we simply act in accordance with our natures. We remain as we are. If we neglect prayer for 24 hours, we are the same at the end of that time as we were at the beginning. When we pray, we change. If we pray a little, we change a little. If we pray a lot, and with understanding, we change a lot. We think, speak, and act in a different and better way. And this, we believe, is what Jesus meant when he said, "You must be born anew."

Ann Overton; San Francico, CA

A sense of peace and unity runs throughout each issue of *FiP*. It helps me to see the interrelatedness of all cultures and religions.

Brian McNamara; Albany, NY

I eagerly look forward to this special publication. My copies are always underlined, dog-eared, full of messy "footprints"—indications of my huge appreciation.

Martha Smith; Cohaset, MA

Enjoy your publication. It touches areas of my life which I need to pay attention to.

Peter W. Oesterlin; Topeka, KS

FiP continues to be a constant source of support and encouragement. Thank you!

J. C. Trexler; Paoli, PA

FiP is a marvelous magazine!

Gerald J. Mullen; Sandy Hook, CT

I want to thank you and *FiP's* staff for your wonderfully inspirational

publication. I am growing spiritually as addiction is being lifted from my life through God's help. I apply the 12 Steps of recovery to my life, and from this came a prayer which I would like to share with readers who are turning to God for healing from addiction:

> Lord, I am powerless over my separation from You and my unmanageable life. I am like St. Paul, who said, "I have the desire to do what is good, but I cannot carry it out." I believe You can return me to wholeness. I turn my life and will over to Your care, since I understand You to be a loving, gentle, and nurturing God. I confess my succumbing to patterns created over my lifetime that hurt me—and others. Not only do I admit this to You, but to myself and to another compassionate listener. I am willing to have You remove my defects of character and take away my shortcomings. I ask for willingness, discernment, and the ability to make appropriate amends in both word and action. I ask for humility to see both the good and the wrong I do and to promptly admit my mistakes, correcting those things I can. In prayer and meditation I seek knowledge of Your will for me and the power to carry that out. As You awaken me spiritually, help me to share Your message with others and to practice Your principles in all my affairs. Thank You for Your unending love. Amen.
>
> *Patricia Campbell Kowal; Spokane, WA*

I love your publication. Read it from cover to cover, then share it with friends. It's a *very* classy production! Thank you.

Claire Moringer; Lafayette, CA

How can I possibly say "thank you" so that you recognize the depth of my feeling! There just aren't words enough to express my appreciation to all who make *Fellowship in Prayer* possible. I praise God for each and every one of you and thank you for caring.

James Whittenberg; Vacaville, CA

Thank you for sending me your book, *Fellowship in Prayer*. It is certainly a comfort to me here in prison.

Mario R.

Each issue of *FiP* seems to be better than the preceding one—yet each is tops. Blessings!

Clarice Lolich, CHS

FiP is a great inspiration to me.

Donna Nance; Shaker Heights, OH

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We welcome articles on prayer, meditation, spiritual experience, religious faith or practices, and similar topics. Preference is given to experiential manuscripts. Manuscripts should not exceed 1500 words, should be typed, double spaced, either on 8½ by 11 inch paper or on a 5¼ inch floppy minidisk, 2S/2D, in WordPerfect 5.0 and sent to The Editor, Fellowship in Prayer, 291 Witherspoon Street, Princeton, NJ 08542. Please include a biography of no more than five lines.

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